

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 NEA-10 TRSE-00 EB-08
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1094

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IT
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR VOLPE'S FAREWELLS: FORLANI ON BREZHNEV;
CRAXI ON PSI DEVELOPMENTS

1. DURING THE PAST WEEK, LEADERS OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAVE ORGANIZED A LARGE NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TO BID FAREWELL TO AMBASSADOR VOLPE. THESE HAVE INCLUDED, AMONG OTHERS, LUNCHEES AND DINNERS GIVEN BY PRESIDENT LEONE, PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI, FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI, SENATE PRESIDENT FANFANI, ETC. THESE ENCOUNTERS HAVE ALL BEEN THE OCCASION FOR UNUSUALLY WARM WORDS OF PRAISE FOR AMBASSADOR VOLPE AND HIS MISSION IN ITALY. BOTH THE NUMBER OF THESE OCCASIONS AND THE WARMTH OF TONE WENT WELL BEYOND WHAT PROTOCOL OR NORMAL PRACTICE WOULD REQUIRE. ALL OF THE GOVERNMENT LEADERS WHO SPOKE ON THESE OCCASIONS STRESSED THE IMPORTANT OF THE US-ITALIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, THANKED AMBASSADOR VOLPE AND THE USG FOR PAST ACTS OF FRIENDSHIP AND GENEROSITY (E.G., FRIULI), REAFFIRMED THEIRS' (AND ITALY'S) COMMITMENT TO THE ALLIANCE AND TO A UNITED EUROPE, AND, FINALLY, THEY MADE A SPECIAL POINT OF WISHING PRESIDENT CARTER WELL IN DEALING WITH THE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF PEACE AROUND THE WORLD.

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2. WHILE THE NATURE OF THESE OCCASIONS LEFT LITTLE TIME OR OPPORTUNITY FOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS OF SPECIFIC ISSUES, FORLANI AND PSI SECRETARY CRAXI DID MAKE SOME REMARKS OF INTEREST. REFERRING TO HIS RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW, FORLANI COVERED SOME OF THE SAME POINTS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN REPORTED (ROME 1050), BUT MADE SOME

ADDITIONAL ONES. HE SAID BREZHNEV TOOK WELL-KNOWN POSITIONS ON MBFR, HELSINKI, ETC. HOWEVER, FORLANI NOTED A DEFINITE MOVEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S POSITION ON THE MID-EAST. IN THE PAST THE RUSSIANS FOUND NO FAULT WITH THE ARAB POSITION AND PUT ALL BLAME FOR THE CURRENT STALEMATE ON THE ISRAELIS. BREZHNEV THIS TIME INDICATED THAT BOTH SIDES -- ARAB AND ISRAELI -- WERE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT STALEMATE. BREZHNEV WAS HOPING THAT A NEW GENEVA CONFERENCE COULD BE BROUGHT TOGETHER, THAT THIS WAS THE YEAR TO DO IT, AND THAT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION HE FELT THE TIMING WAS RIGHT. FORLANI SAID THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE NOT INSISTING ON THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PLO AT THESE MEETINGS, SAYING ONLY THAT THIS WAS AN ISSUE THAT THE ARABS HAD TO DECIDE AMONG THEMSELVES.

3. DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL ON CRAXI, JANUARY 21, CRAXI WAS VERY OPEN AND FRIENDLY. HE EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE INTEREST THAT THE USG HAS SHOWN IN HIM AND IN HIS PARTY. HE CLEARLY WANTS TO BRING THE PARTY AROUND TO SUPPORTING HIS AUTONOMOUS (FROM THE PCI) POSITIONS. HE IS PLEASED THAT HE IS MAKING PROGRESS IN THIS DIRECTION AND HE CITED EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT THAT HE IS GETTING FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY FOR HIS LINE. MORE AND MORE OF HIS MEN ARE BEING ELECTED TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE REGIONS, PROVINCES, ETC.

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4. ALTHOUGH CRAXI MADE NO REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE, HE WENT INTO SOME DETAIL EXPLAINING THE SORRY STATE OF PSI FINANCES. HE SAID THAT THEY DESPERATELY NEEDED HELTP FINANCIALLY IF THEY ARE TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF RECOUPING VOTES FROM THE COMMUNISTS.

5. CRAXI INDICATED HE IS COMMITTED TO BRINGING THE PSI BACK TO GOVERNMENT AS SOON AS HE FEELS SECURE ENOUGH IN HIS POSITION TO DO IT. THE TIME IS NOT AT HAND AND HE DID NOT SPECULATE AS TO WHEN THAT MIGHT BE.

6. CRAXI DEFINITELY WANTS TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES THIS SPRING AND ASKED THAT AMBASSADOR VOLPE PASS ALONG TO THE DEPARTMENT AND THE NEW AMBASSADOR THAT HE IS READY TO GO WHENEVER THEY FEEL WOULD BE THE BEST TIME FROM THE WASHINGTON STANDPOINT; LATE MARCH OR EARLY APRIL WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR HIM. BEAUDRY

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
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Drafter: n/a
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